

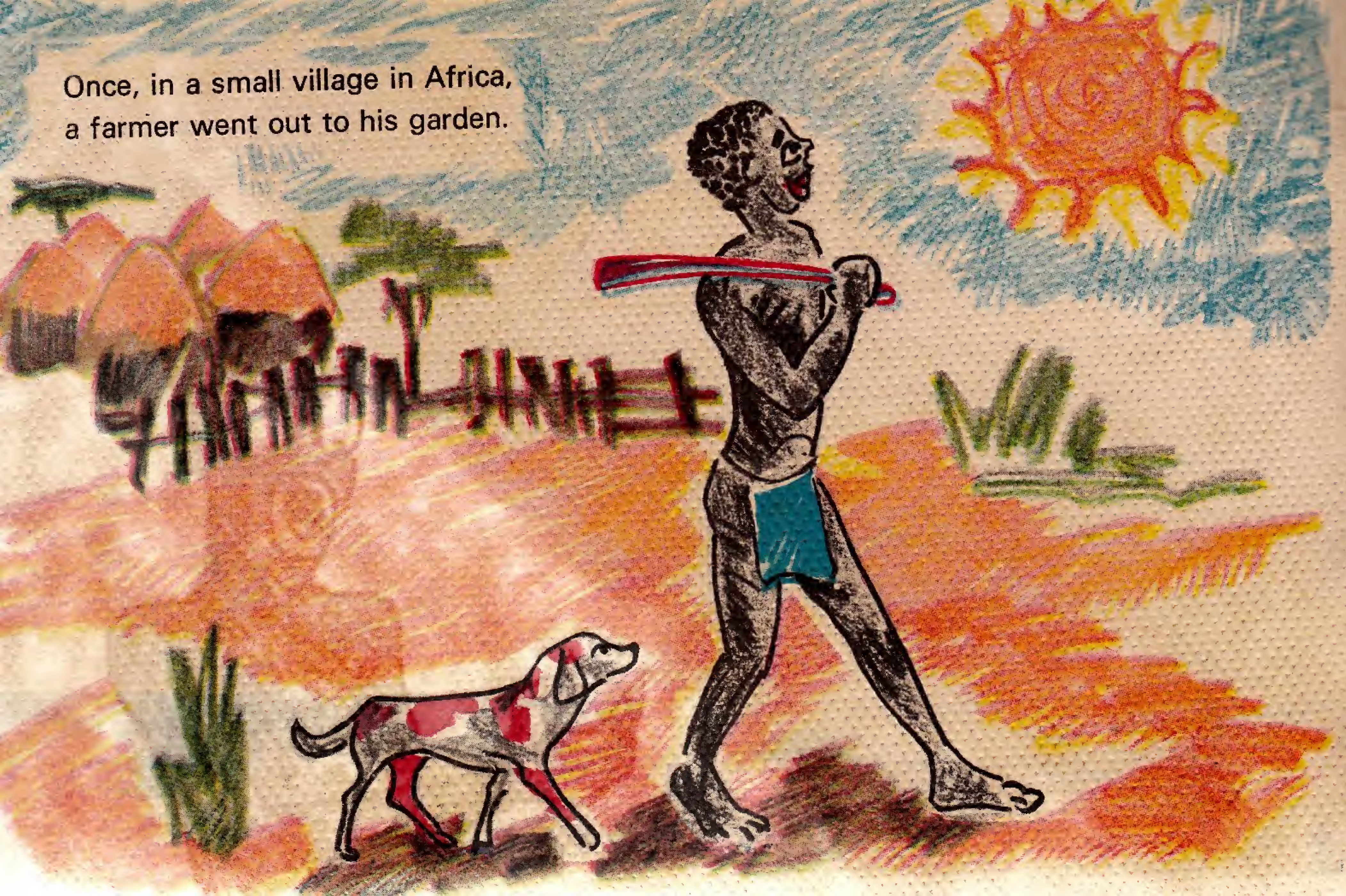
**talk**



a CIEFL  
graded reader  
GRADE TWO



Once, in a small village in Africa,  
a farmer went out to his garden.





He wanted to dig up some yams.  
He started digging.  
Suddenly one of the yams said to him,



*yam : a reddish sweet potato*

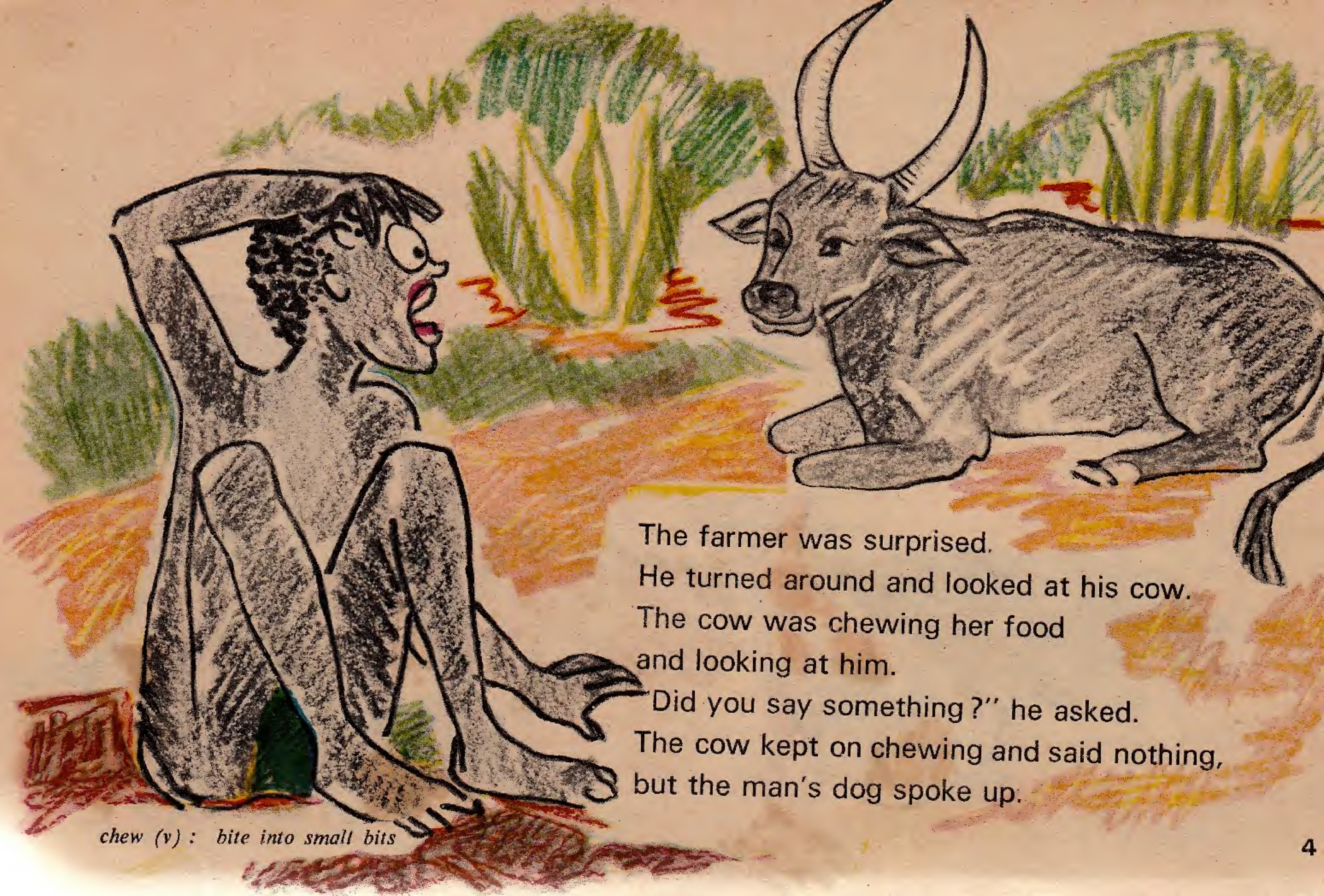


“Well, at last you’re here.  
You never looked after me —  
never weeded me, never watered me.  
But now you’ve come with your digging stick.  
Go away and leave me alone!”



*weed (v) : pull out plants not wanted*





The farmer was surprised.  
He turned around and looked at his cow.  
The cow was chewing her food  
and looking at him.  
“Did you say something?” he asked.  
The cow kept on chewing and said nothing,  
but the man’s dog spoke up.

*chew (v) : bite into small bits*



"The cow didn't speak," the dog said.

"But the yam did.

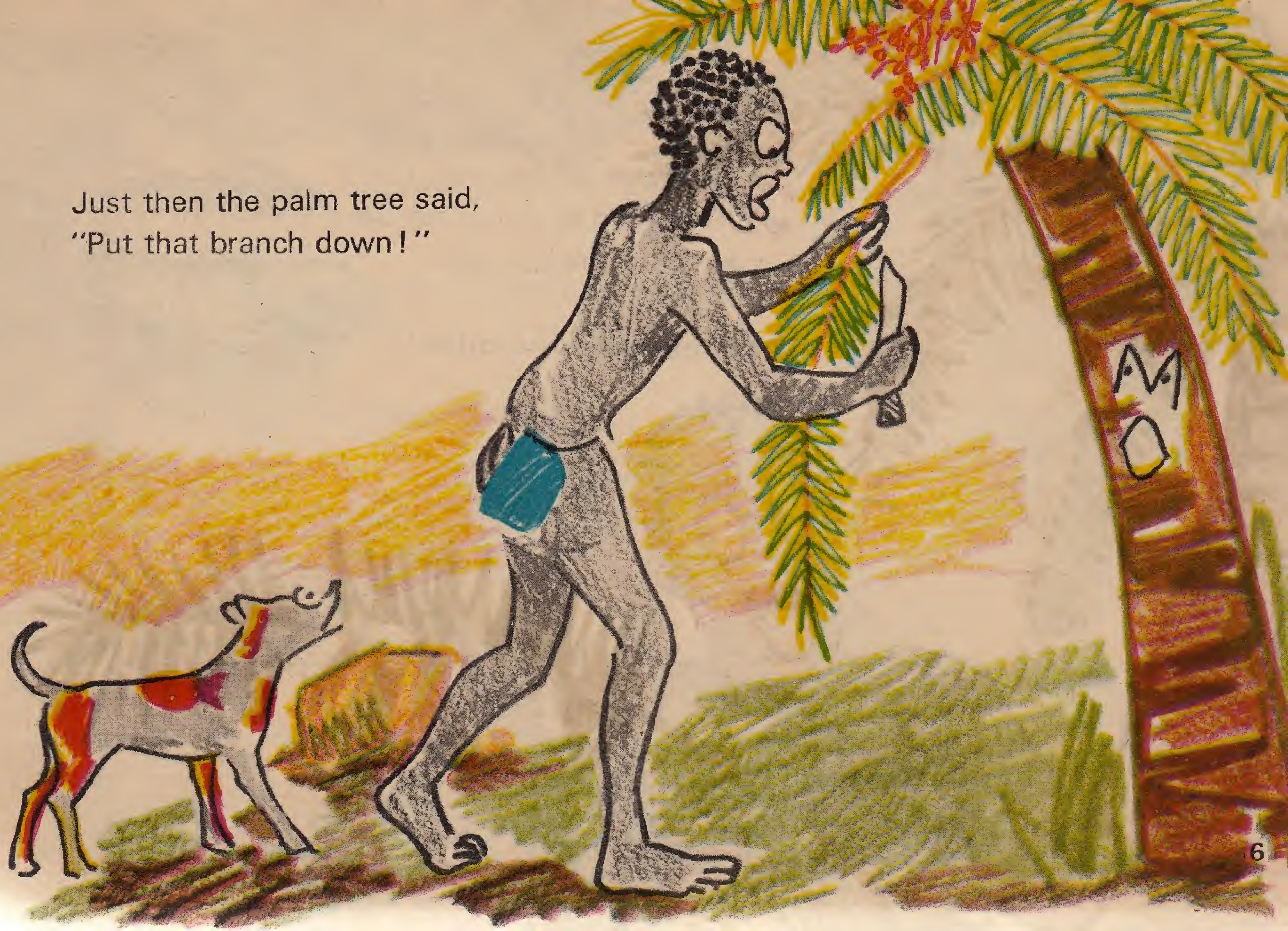
The yam asks you to leave him alone."

The man became angry,  
because his dog had never talked before,  
and he didn't like the way the dog talked.  
So he took his knife  
and cut a branch from a palm tree to beat his dog.

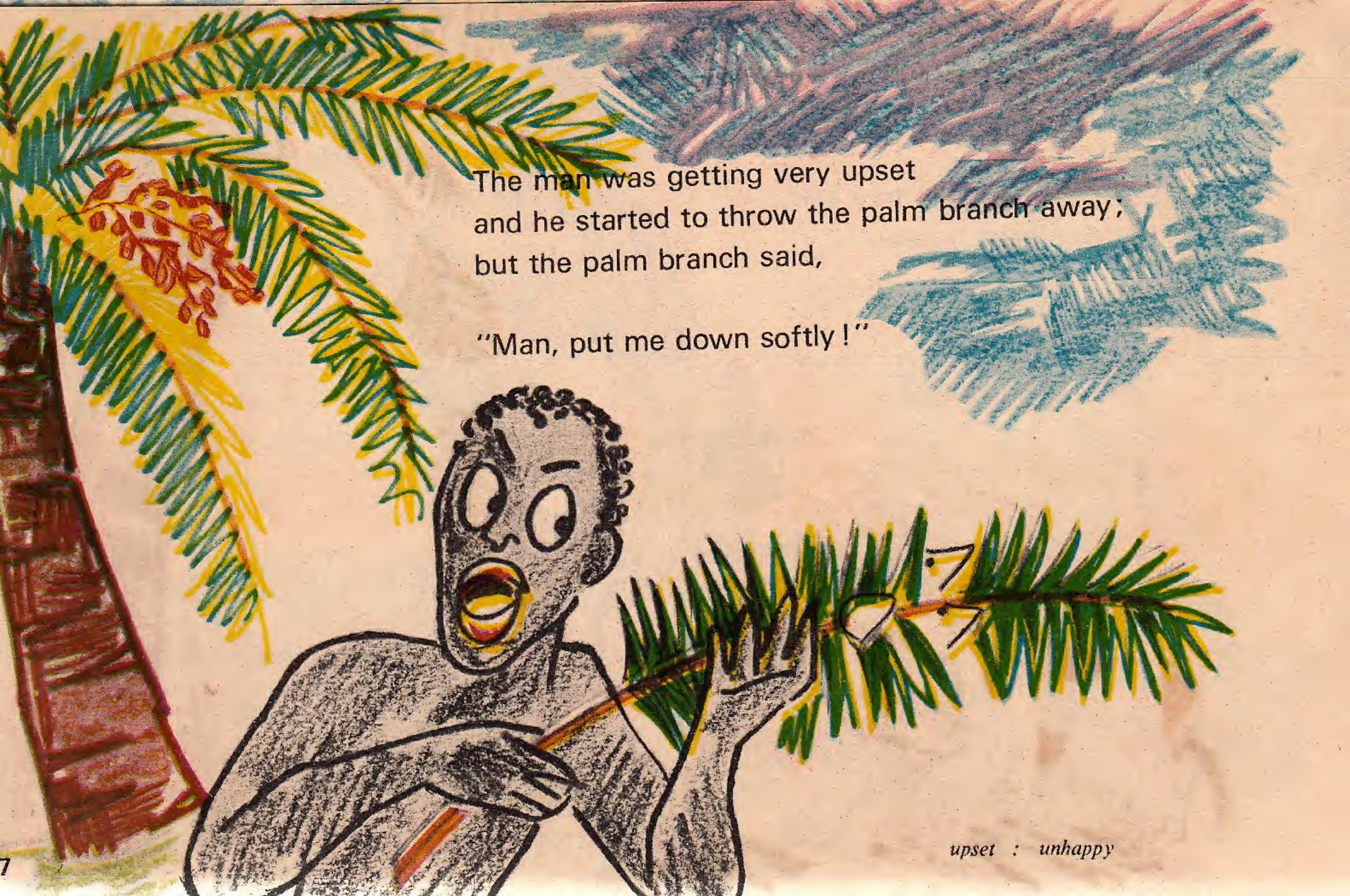




Just then the palm tree said,  
"Put that branch down!"





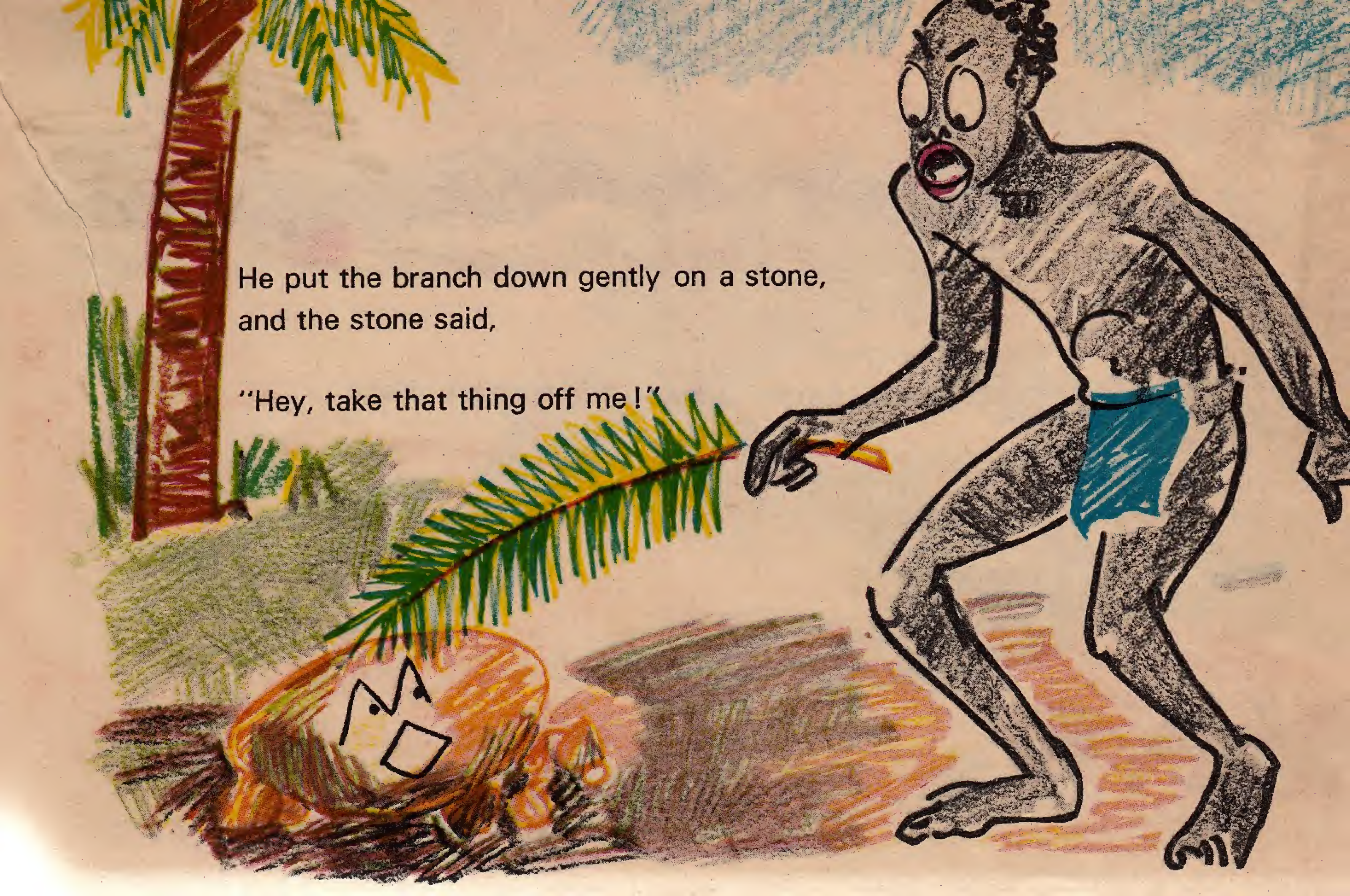
A man with a surprised expression, wide eyes, and an open mouth is holding a palm branch. He is wearing a grey, textured garment. The background features a large palm tree on the left with green fronds and a cluster of red coconuts, and a blue, textured sky or background on the right. The man is holding the branch with both hands, and the branch has green fronds and a brown stem.

The man was getting very upset  
and he started to throw the palm branch away;  
but the palm branch said,

“Man, put me down softly !”

*upset : unhappy*

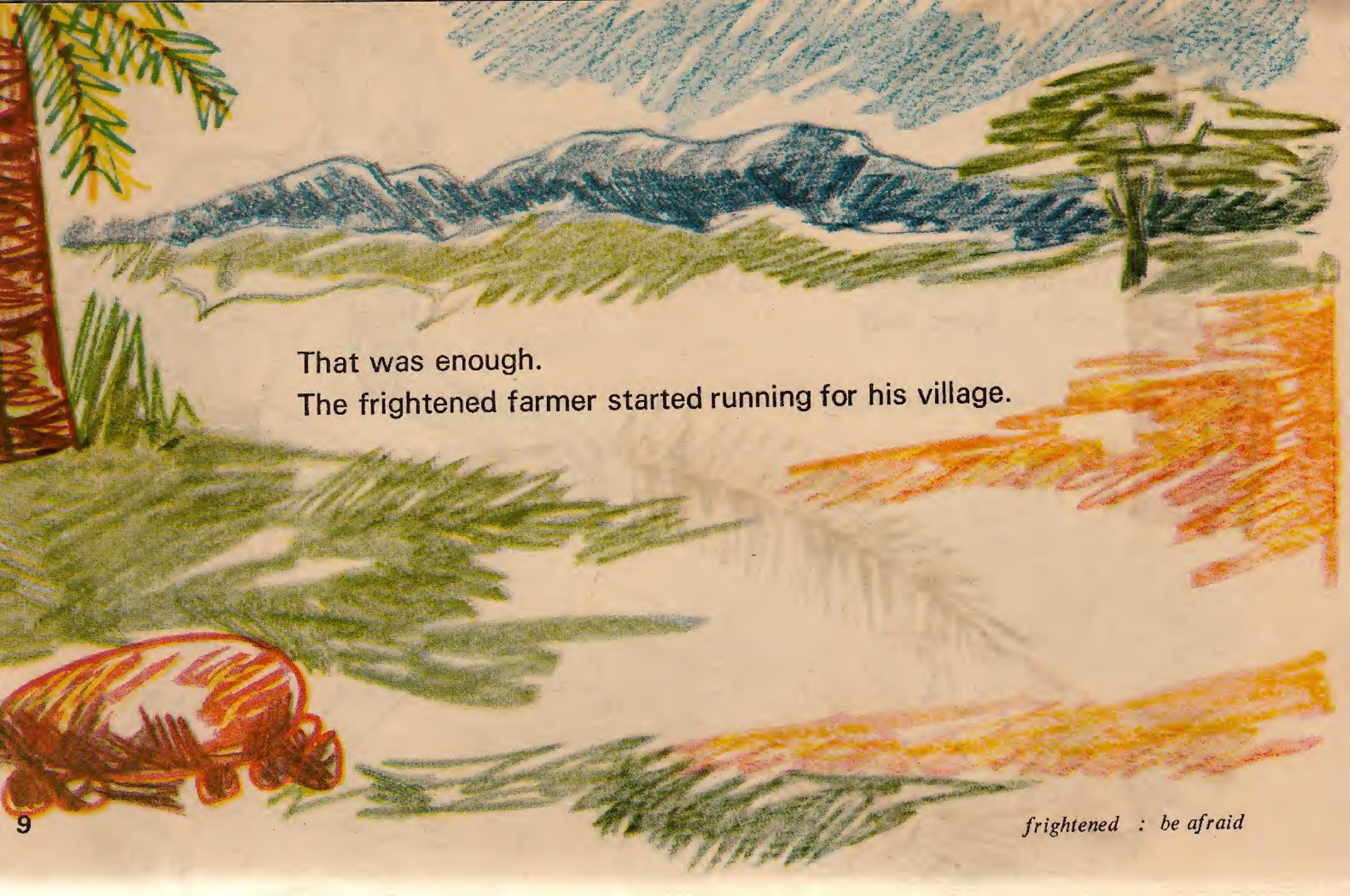




He put the branch down gently on a stone,  
and the stone said,

“Hey, take that thing off me!”





That was enough.  
The frightened farmer started running for his village.







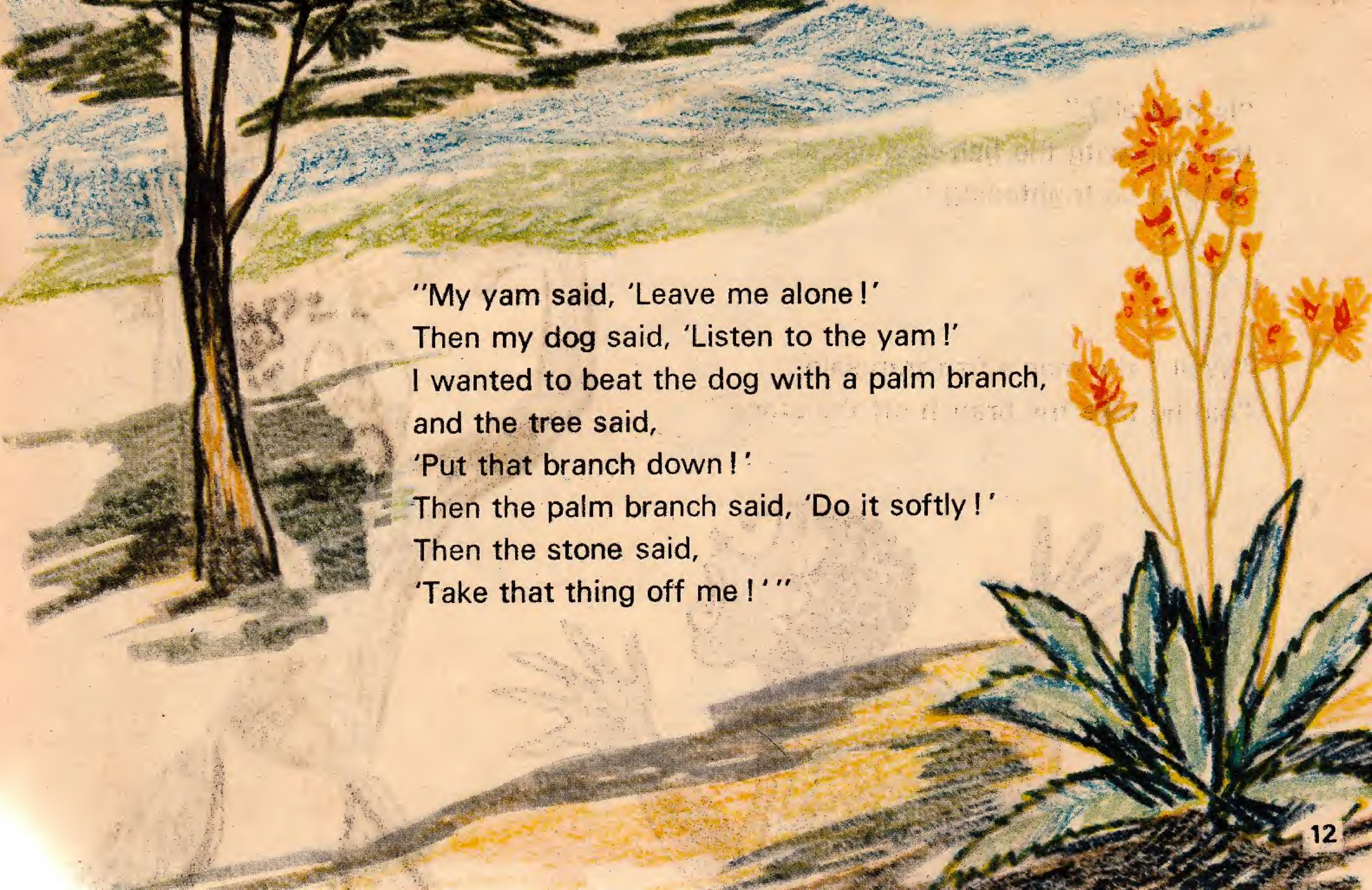


On the way he met a fisherman,  
with a fish-trap on his head.

“What’s the hurry?” the fisherman asked.

*hurry : moving very quickly*





“My yam said, ‘Leave me alone!’  
Then my dog said, ‘Listen to the yam!’  
I wanted to beat the dog with a palm branch,  
and the tree said,  
‘Put that branch down!’  
Then the palm branch said, ‘Do it softly!’  
Then the stone said,  
‘Take that thing off me!’”



"Is that all?"  
the man with the fish-trap asked.  
"Is that so frightening?"

"Well," the man's fish-trap said,  
"did he take the branch off the stone?"





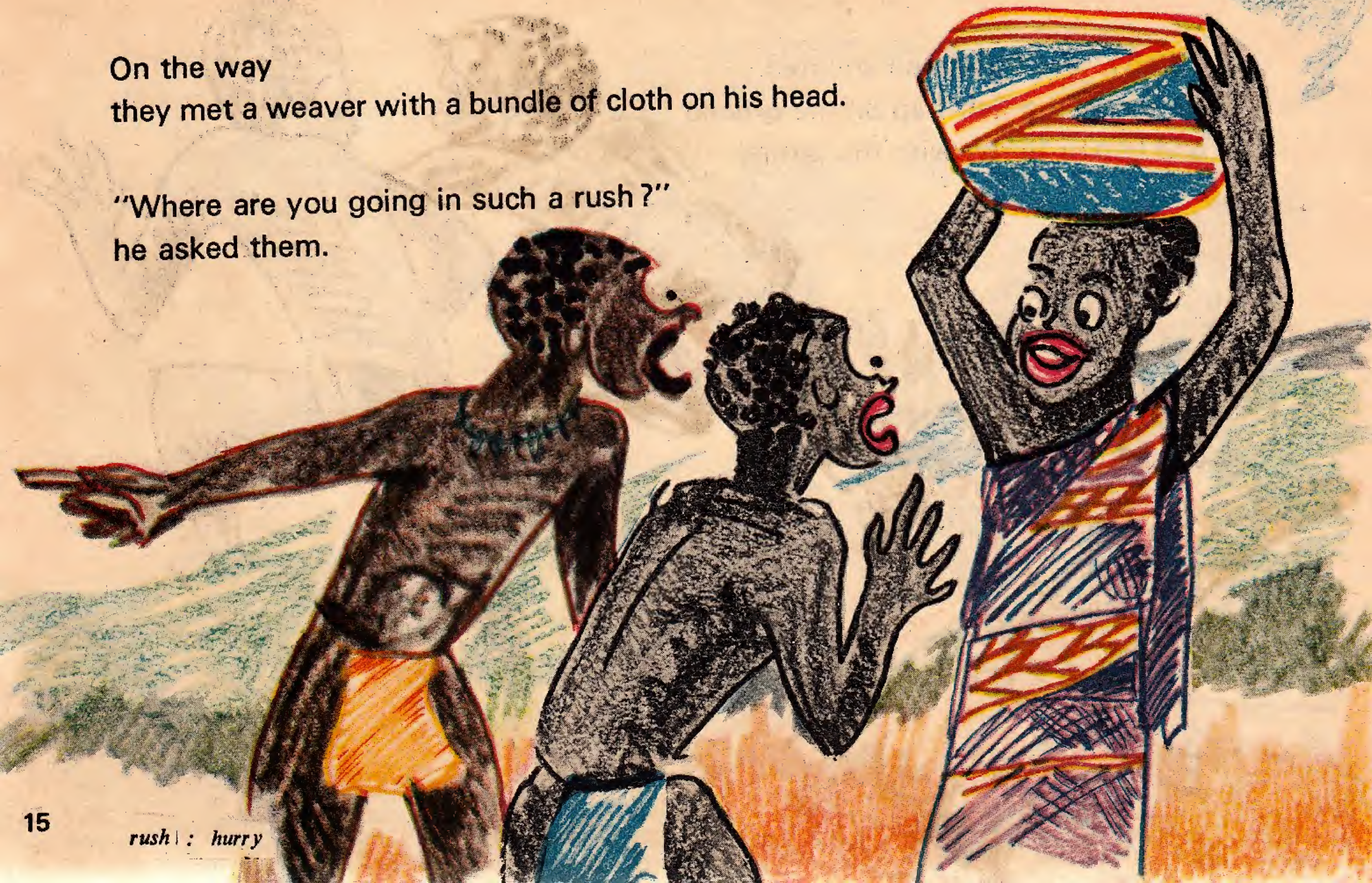
"Wah!" the fisherman shouted.  
He threw the fish-trap on the ground  
and began to run with the farmer.



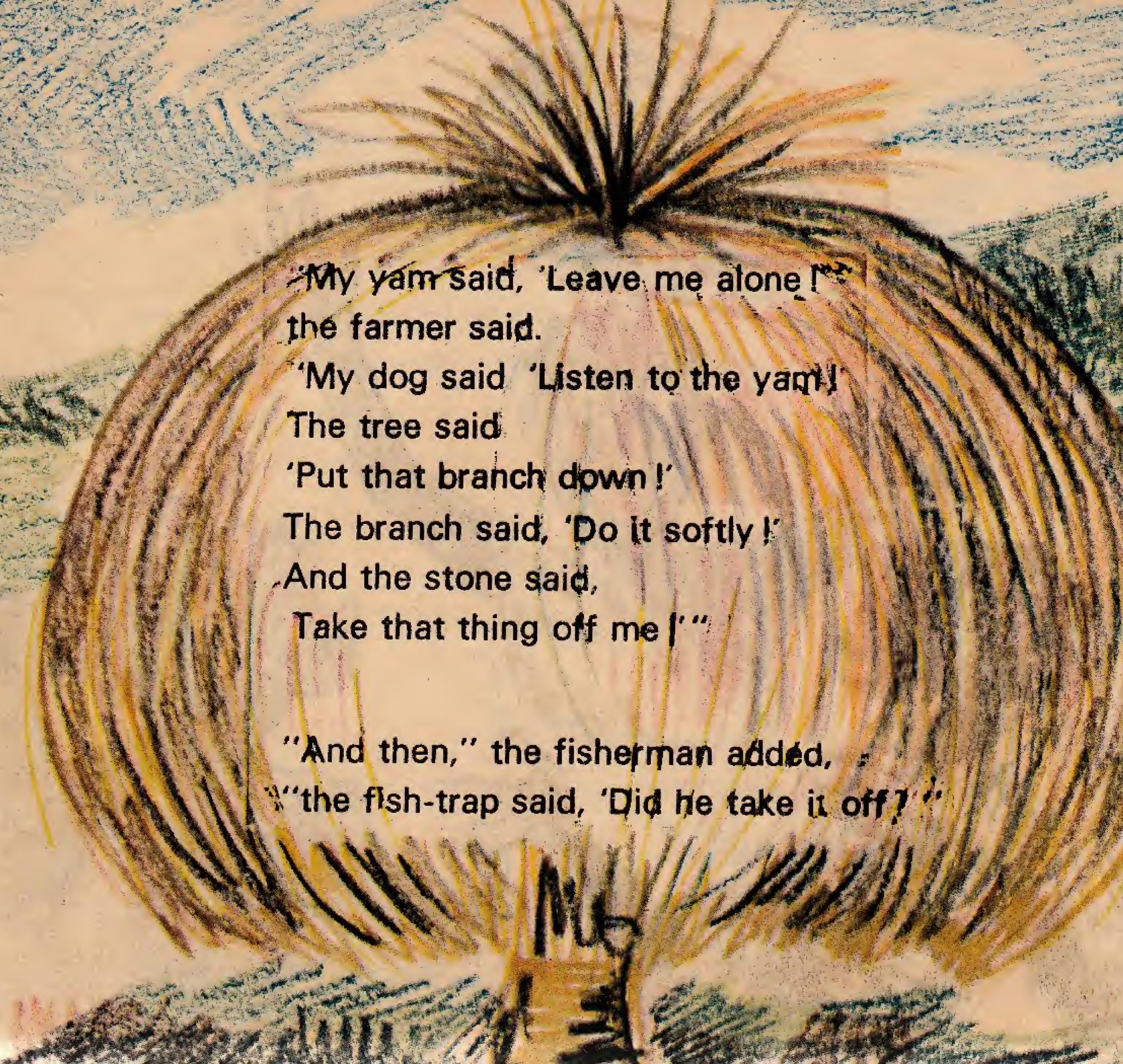


On the way  
they met a weaver with a bundle of cloth on his head.

"Where are you going in such a rush?"  
he asked them.







**My yam said, 'Leave me alone!'**  
**the farmer said.**

**'My dog said 'Listen to the yam!'**

**The tree said**

**'Put that branch down!'**

**The branch said, 'Do it softly!'**

**And the stone said,**

**Take that thing off me!'"**

**"And then," the fisherman added,**

**"the fish-trap said, 'Did he take it off?'"**







"That's no reason to run," the weaver said.

"No reason at all."

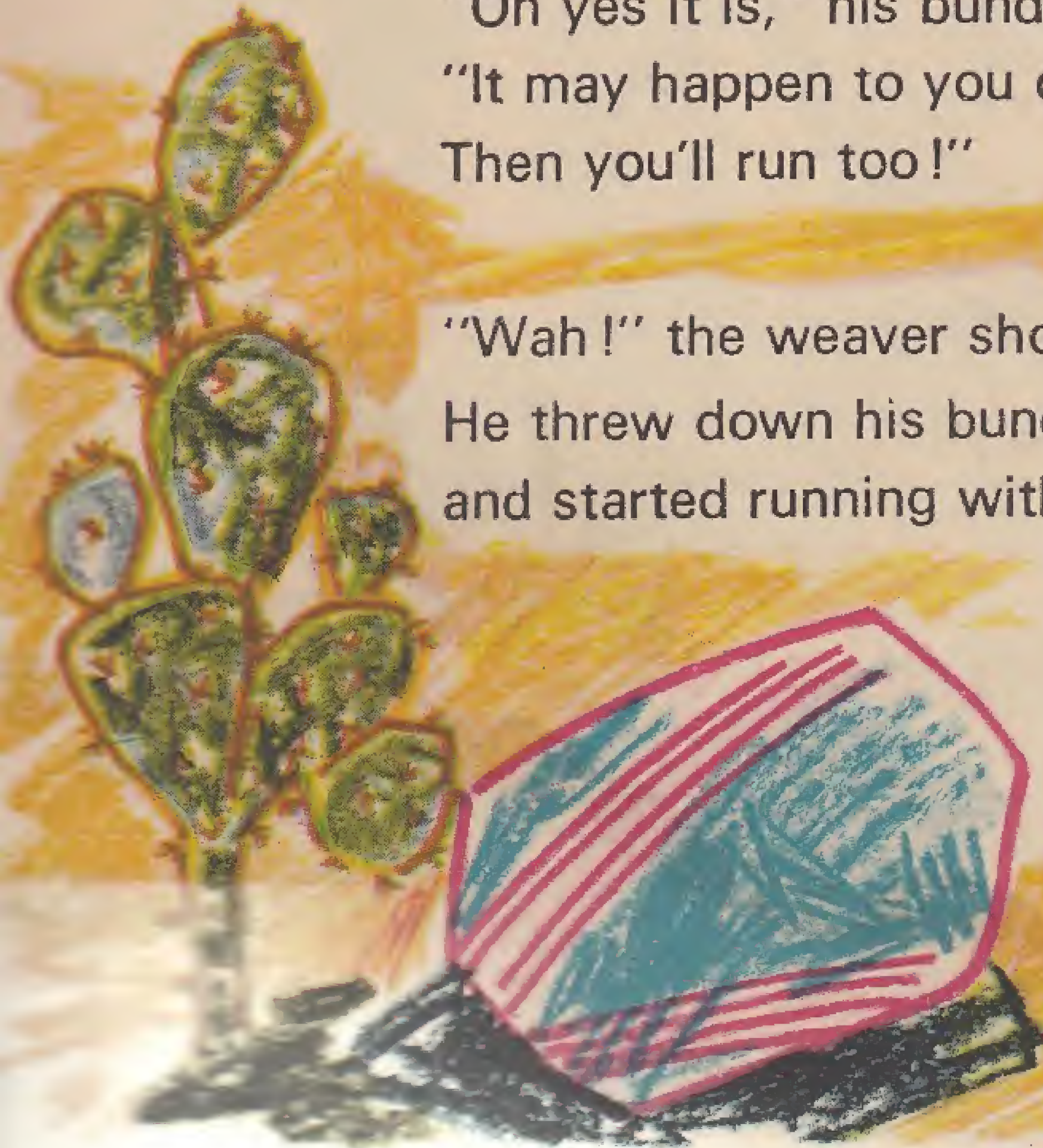
"Oh yes it is," his bundle of cloth said.

"It may happen to you one day.

Then you'll run too!"

"Wah!" the weaver shouted.

He threw down his bundle  
and started running with the other men.







They came to the river and found a man bathing.

“Are you chasing a deer?”  
he asked them.

The first man said,  
“My yam said, ‘Leave me alone!’  
And my dog said,  
‘Listen to your yam!’  
And when I cut a branch,  
the tree said, ‘Put that branch down!’  
And the branch said,  
‘Do it softly!’  
And the stone said, ‘Take that thing off me!’”







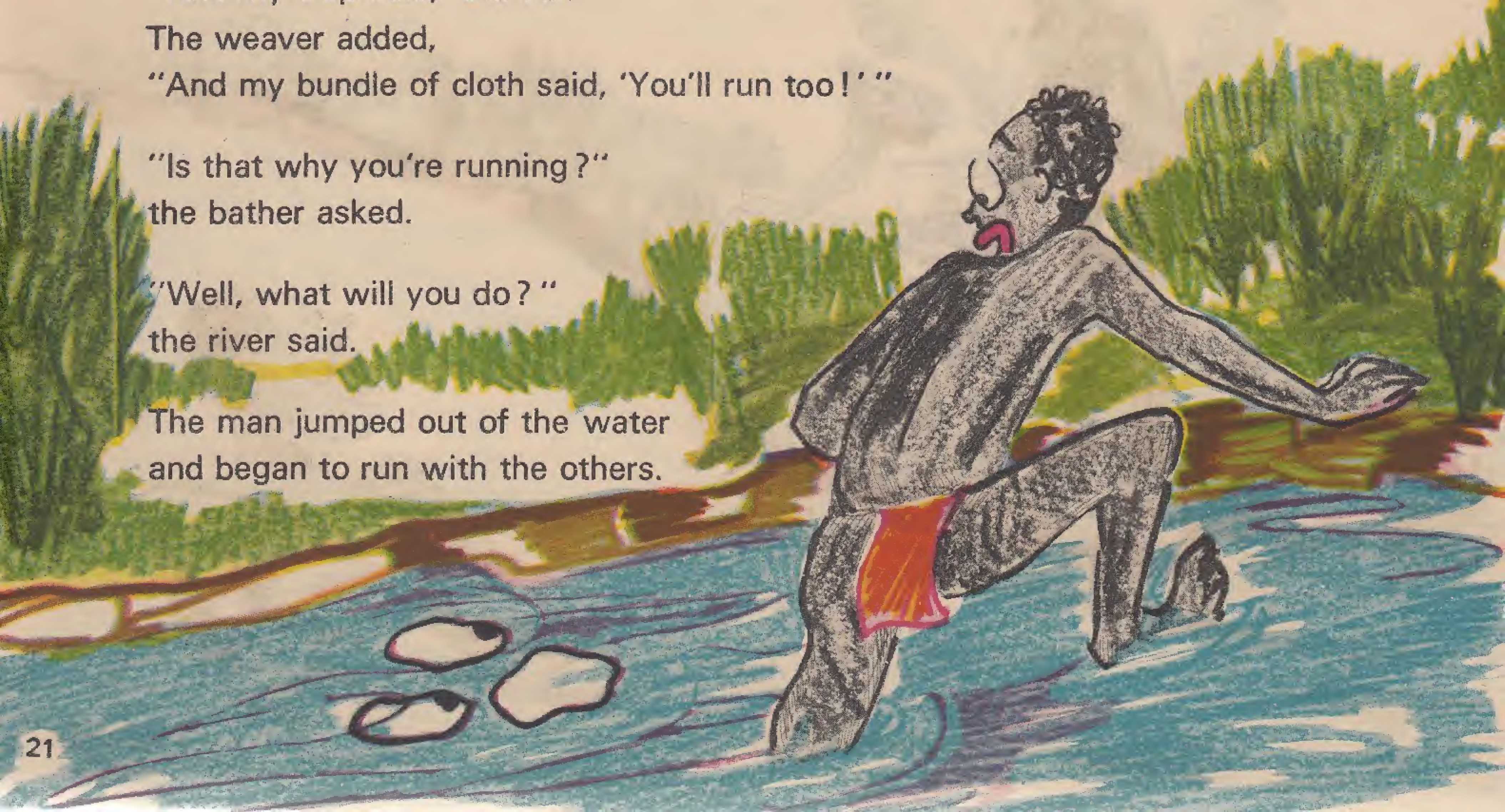
The fisherman said,  
"And my trap said, 'Did he?'"

The weaver added,  
"And my bundle of cloth said, 'You'll run too!'"

"Is that why you're running?"  
the bather asked.

"Well, what will you do?"  
the river said.

The man jumped out of the water  
and began to run with the others.





They ran down the main street of the village  
to the house of the chief.

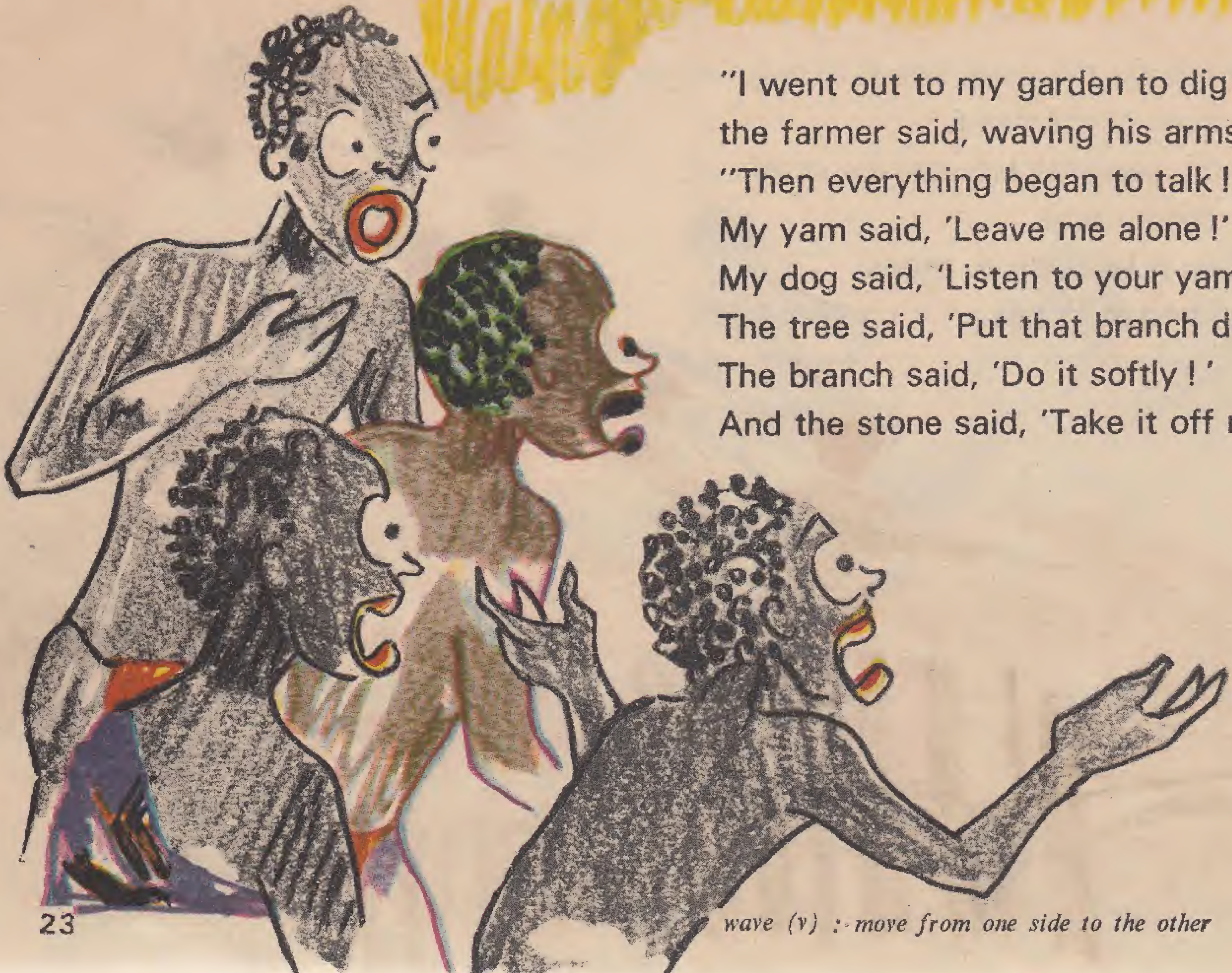
The chief's servants brought his stool out,  
and the chief came  
and sat on it to listen to them.

The men began to talk.



*chief : ruler ; leader*





"I went out to my garden to dig yams,"  
the farmer said, waving his arms.  
"Then everything began to talk !  
My yam said, 'Leave me alone !'  
My dog said, 'Listen to your yam !'  
The tree said, 'Put that branch down !'  
The branch said, 'Do it softly !'  
And the stone said, 'Take it off me !' "



"And my fish-trap said,  
'Well, did he take it off?' "  
the fisherman said.

"And my cloth said, 'You'll run too!' "  
the weaver said.

"And the river said, 'What will you do?' "  
the bather said.

The chief listened to them quietly,  
but he was a little angry.





"Now this is really a silly story,"  
he said at last.  
"Go back to your work, all of you.  
Or I'll punish you  
for telling wild stories."

So the men went away,  
and the chief shook his head  
and mumbled to himself,  
"Nonsense like that will upset the village."





"Silly, isn't it?" his stool said.  
"A talking yam, indeed!"







General Editor M. L. TICKO

Original story by Harold Courlander and George Herzog

Simplified by SIPRA ROY CHOUDHURY

Edited by V. SASIKUMAR

Illustrated by LYDIA VICTOR

Technical Adviser R.K. GUPTA

© This simplified version CIEFL, 197

© Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, Inc.

Permission to publish this version has been applied for

*Produced by the Department of Materials Production*

*Published by the Publications Unit*

*Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad-500 007 (INDIA)*

**Printed at Navabharat Printers & Traders, Madras-60001**